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the army, to relief work, and to military affairs. One group, consisting of communications and papers exchanged with departments of the federal government and executives of other states, doubtless contains Minnesota material. All these collections, and especially the first two, should be searched for documents bearing on Minnesota history, and a calendar, or better still, photostatic copies of such documents should be secured for the Minnesota Historical Society.

S. J. B.

Life Story of Rasmus B. Anderson. Written by himself with the assistance of ALBERT O. BARTON. (Madison, Wisconsin, 1915. xix, 678 p.)

The parents of Mr. Anderson were among the early Norwegian immigrants to America, coming to this country in 1836. Mr. Anderson was born ten years later. This life story, therefore, spans almost the whole period of Norwegian immigration. Its author has been for a long time a prominent figure among the Norwegians in this country, and has been connected in peculiar degree with many of the movements in this element. At present he is the editor of *Amerika*, a well-known Norwegian weekly newspaper, in the columns of which the present autobiography appeared. He has been professor of Scandinavian languages and literature at the University of Wisconsin, and from 1885 to 1889 he served as United States minister to Denmark. Mr. Anderson has been particularly eminent as a writer. Appended to the present work is a bibliography of his writings which lists between forty and fifty items. The best-known of these are perhaps *Norse Mythology*, *Viking Tales of the North*, *America not Discovered by Columbus*, and *The First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*. The latter deals with the period 1821–40, and, though somewhat verbose and in parts uncritical, is of much value. As a translator Mr. Anderson has turned into English some seven volumes of the writings of Björnstjerne Björnson, in addition to Winkel Horn's *History of the Literature of the Scandinavian North*, Rydberg's *Teutonic Mythology*, and other works. He is also the editor of the sumptuous *Norræna Library*, in sixteen volumes, and the four-volume edition of the *Heims-*

kringla. His literary productions, especially his translations, have been extensive. Because of his activity in these directions, and the pioneer nature of this work, he has been called the father of Norwegian literature in America.

Mr. Barton writes in his preface that Mr. Anderson's "autobiography will be particularly interesting from two points of view, his accounts of the beginnings of Norwegian settlements in this country, and his recollections and estimates of notables he met not only during his five years' residence near the court of Denmark, but also before and since." From the standpoint of immigration the book contributes little that is new. Some of the material can be found, in another form, in his *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*. On the other hand, there is interest and significance in his recollections of prominent men. Among these are to be noted especially a number of church leaders in the Norwegian Synod in the sixties, as well as later churchmen in the Northwest, such as Professors Sven Oftedal and Georg Sverdrup; likewise men connected with the beginnings of educational work among the Scandinavians in the West; distinguished Norwegians, more especially the poet Björnson, Henrik Ibsen, and Ole Bull, and a large number of prominent Danes and Swedes with whom Mr. Anderson associated while United States minister to Denmark; literary men like Longfellow, John Fiske, Bayard Taylor, Mark Twain, W. D. Howells, and others; politicians and local leaders in Wisconsin and other northwestern states. Many interesting names occur in these pages, and frequently the accompanying characterizations are shrewd, although occasionally the strong personal bias of the writer is apparent.

Mr. Anderson is a controversialist of the first rank, and in his disputes he can be exceedingly obstinate, bitter, and persistent. Naturally he has made many enemies; in fact, he feels that he has alienated the majority of his countrymen in the United States. In the accounts of these controversies much light is thrown upon the conditions that have obtained among Norsemen in this country—their religious, social, and educational activity.

Like many autobiographies this is in some degree a defence. In connection with many of the affairs of which Mr. Anderson writes, bitter feeling and deadly animosity are still harbored.

Parts of the book are therefore in themselves controversial, as, for example, the chapter dealing with the Norwegian Society, an organization the purpose of which was to promote Norwegian culture. Mr. Anderson had protested vigorously against the sort of literature produced by Ibsen, Björnson, Brandes, and other prominent Norwegian writers, in their later years, and he found himself opposed by most of the Norwegian-American newspapers. He also carried on a spirited campaign for the purpose of purging the Norwegian newspapers of unclean and vicious advertisements. As one of the founders, he proposed that the Norwegian Society should be a Christian, and to all intents and purposes a Lutheran, organization. The admirers of the later works of Ibsen and Björnson, he felt, would have "to take a back seat." A violent controversy ensued, and complete control of the Norwegian Society passed into the hands of Mr. Anderson's opponents. Another chapter is devoted to R. M. La Follette. Unlike the majority of Norwegians in Wisconsin, Mr. Anderson has been a stern opponent of La Follette, and considerable space is used in an attempt to prove that the Wisconsin senator is the Iago of American politics. There are few matters in which Mr. Anderson has not been in the right, according to his story; but of course most controversies have two sides. The following is a typical sentence: "While I was defending decency, morality, and Christianity my enemies made me the object of persecution, and most of those who ought to be my friends left me in the lurch" (p. 630).

As a source of information regarding the Norwegian element in this country, as well as an intimate study of Rasmus B. Anderson, this life story is of considerable value, but it will have to be used with utmost care. Things are looked at from one point of view throughout, and the author is strictly partisan. Moreover, an autobiographer is naturally the center of the story which he weaves, and the perspective may, therefore, at times be greatly distorted. The rôle of a writer may not always have been what his own recital suggests. Careful study of evidence is necessary in order to determine just what his true position was. Throughout this volume the author relates in considerable detail the many honors that have been conferred upon him. In referring to his publications, he supplies copious extracts from favorable reviews,

and has much to say about the influence of his writings, and the effect of his speeches.

Mr. Anderson has rendered a very worthy service by making America familiar with the great literary wealth of Scandinavia. For this alone he will occupy no insignificant place in the history of the Norwegian element in the United States, and his autobiography will have permanent value.

THEODORE C. BLEGEN

By the Great Wall: Letters from China. Selected correspondence of ISABELLA RIGGS WILLIAMS, missionary of the American Board to China, 1866-97. With an introduction by ARTHUR H. SMITH. (New York, etc., Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909. 400 p. Illustrated)

The writer of the letters published in this volume was a daughter of Stephen R. Riggs, the famous missionary to the Sioux Indians in Minnesota. The first chapter, entitled "A Goodly Heritage," deals with the life and experiences of the Riggs family in Minnesota. It opens with a few pages of memories of the early days in the mission home at Lac qui Parle by Anna Riggs Warner, another daughter, and continues with letters written by Isabella Riggs, mostly from Minnesota, during the years 1854 to 1865. This chapter forms an interesting supplement to the classic account in *Mary and I, or Forty Years with the Sioux*, by the father of the family.

In 1866 Isabella Riggs was married to Mark Williams, and in a few weeks the young couple started for China to devote their lives to missionary work. The remainder of the book, with the exception of the last chapter, consists of letters from China from 1866 to the death of the writer in 1897, and presents a vivid picture of missionary activities and of Chinese life and conditions. The last chapter contains letters, mostly from China, by a daughter, Henrietta Williams, whose death followed shortly upon that of her mother.

S. J. B.